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## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Sprache als Schöpfung und Entwicklung: Eine theoretische Untersuchung mit praktischen Beispielen.* Von KARL VOSSLER. Heidelberg: Winter, 1905. Pp. viii + 154. M. 4.

This is a continuation of the same author's *Positivismus und Idealismus in der Sprachwissenschaft* (1905). In the last chapter of the earlier book (p. 91) Vossler had distinguished between the origin (*Schöpfung*) of a linguistic phenomenon and its acceptance by, and spread through, the community (*Entwicklung*). Every linguistic form originates through the activity of an individual, and is therefore in its inception individualistic, but it does not become part of the language until the rest of the community accept it and repeat it, either passively by simple imitation, or actively by modifying it in some degree. This distinction between original (primary) and imitative (secondary) changes seems to me exceedingly important.<sup>1</sup> The more clearly it is made and maintained the greater, naturally, will be the importance attached to the individual's language, his particular concrete way of utterance with all its variety and mobility—in brief, his style. Contrasted with this, our grammars present what is typical in the utterances of many individuals, and therefore the linguistic forms treated by them are more abstract, shorn of their individualism. The more individualistic a form of expression is, the less it is likely to find a place in an ordinary grammar, because its character is then considered stylistic rather than grammatical. And yet Vossler rightly insists that all linguistic investigation should start with the individual's concrete utterance.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, such individualistic treatment tends away<sup>3</sup> from the schematic arrangement of our grammars (which, for the sake of classification, are forced to slight details) and throws the burden upon a psychological interpretation of single cases. For reasons which it would take too long to discuss here, Vossler calls such interpretation "aesthetic" rather than "psychological" (*Positivismus*, p. 40; *Spr.*

<sup>1</sup>Cf. the reviewer's *Lectures on the Study of Language* (1901), pp. 136–49, and Delbrück *Einleitung* (1904), p. 149. Compare also Vossler's *Positivismus*, p. 93, with the reviewer's *Lectures*, pp. 267–72.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Delbrück *Einleitung* (1904), p. 175: "Überhaupt wird es die Aufgabe sein, immer genauer durch Beobachtung festzustellen, was bei den einzelnen Individuen im Sprechen vor sich geht."

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Morris *On Principles and Methods in Latin Syntax* (1901), p. 217, and the reviewer, *Congress of Arts and Science, Universal Exposition, St. Louis, 1904*, III (1906), p. 62.

*als Sch.*, p. 61). Suffice it to say that the relation between psychology and linguistics does not present itself to me as it does to Vossler (pp. 22 f.). Linguistics, as an empirical branch of study, deals with a certain set of psycho-physical phenomena. It is the province of psychology to correlate these special phenomena and processes of language with kindred phenomena and processes outside of language; e. g., the analogy-formations in language with other non-linguistic phenomena which rest upon associative processes. In this way psychology becomes interpretative.

A large part of the volume is devoted to a discussion of phonetic changes and "phonetic law," and here the reviewer is in many respects in full agreement with Vossler's views, so especially with his refusal to accept the time-honored contrast between "mechanical (physiological)" and "analogical (psychological)" changes,<sup>4</sup> and to assign to phonetic changes an isolated position, as if they were *toto caelo* different from other linguistic changes.<sup>5</sup> What is peculiar to Vossler is the great importance which he attributes to the momentary psychical (emotional) states of the individual in influencing the form of his utterance.<sup>6</sup> These have been occasionally referred to before (as for the aspirated comparatives and superlatives of the dialect of West Somerset,<sup>7</sup> or forms like the Sanskrit *gráuṣat*<sup>8</sup>), but they have never been so strongly emphasized as is done here, where they appear as the sole ultimate cause of all phonetic changes. I feel convinced that they play an important rôle, but I am still somewhat skeptical regarding the possibility of arriving at very definite results in the search for ultimate causes.<sup>9</sup> A clearer distinction between "ultimate" and "immediate" causes would, I believe, have modified Vossler's discussion of "mechanical" changes,<sup>10</sup> for the immediate causes of certain phonetic changes can certainly be purely mechanical. Like Vossler's earlier book the present volume is suggestive throughout. As was to be expected of the author of *Die philosophischen Grundlagen zum "süssen neuen Stil"*, he is at his best in the analysis of delicate phonetic and semantic shades, and in the discussion of their psychological causes. His style seems at times somewhat evasive, not unlike Humboldt's, whom he appears to have taken for his model (*Positivismus*, p. v.).

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. *Sprache als Schöpfung*, pp. 28 f.; the reviewer's *Lectures*, pp. 263 f.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. *Sprache als Schöpfung*, p. 41; the reviewer's *Lectures*, p. 271.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. *Sprache als Schöpfung*, pp. 51 and 81, where all *Lautwandel* is declared to rest upon *Stilwandel*.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Elworthy in *English Dialect Society XVII* (1875-86), p. 20, note 1; Jespersen *Lehrbuch der Phonetik* (1904), p. 97.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Wackernagel *Altind. Gramm.* I (1896), p. 300.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. the reviewer's *Lectures*, p. 197, § 6.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. *Sprache als Schöpfung*, p. 44; the reviewer's *Lectures*, pp. 201 f.